

## RB 42 Silence After Compline

<sup>1</sup>Monastics ought to **strive for silence** at all times, but **especially** during the night hours. <sup>2</sup>**Accordingly, this will always be the arrangement whether for fast days** or for ordinary days. <sup>3</sup>**When there are two meals**, all will sit together immediately after rising from supper. **Someone should read** from the Conferences or the Lives of the early church writers or at any rate something else that will **benefit** the hearers, <sup>4</sup>but not the **Heptateuch** or the **Books of Kings**, because it will not be **good** for those of **weak understanding** to hear these writings at that hour; they should be read at other times.

<sup>5</sup>**On fast days** there is to be a **short interval** between Vespers and the reading of the Conferences, as we have indicated. <sup>6</sup>Then let **four or five pages be read**, or as many as time permits. <sup>7</sup>This reading period will allow for all to come together, **in case any** were engaged in assigned tasks. <sup>8</sup>**When all have come together**, they should say Compline, and **when they leave Compline**, no one has permission to say anything more to anyone. <sup>9</sup>If monastics are found **to transgress** this rule of silence, they must be subjected to severe punishment. <sup>10</sup>Exceptions to this rule of silence are when **guests arrive (require attention)** or the prioress might perhaps command someone to do something. <sup>11</sup>Yet even this should be carried out with the **utmost seriousness** and **delicate reserve**.

- Description for ending the day in the community
- First effect of exterior silence: to develop a sense of interior peace
- Second effect of exterior silence: provides the stillness that enables the ear of the heart to hear.
- Rest our spirits as well as our bodies
- V1 “strive for silence”—will not always succeed
- V 4 Heptateuch:--First seven books of the Bible: Gn, Ex., Lev., Num., Deut., Joshua, & Judges
- V3,5 Benedict is talking about a mitigated fast when the meal would be eaten at mid-afternoon; during the Lenten fast, the meal was in the evening.
- V6-7 Reading is a stopgap while the community comes together.
- V 8 Coming together, sitting together, is the emphasis (v. 3,7,8)
- V 9 collude in evil—transgress
- V10 The needs of guests should occur (untimely arrival)
- V 11 Deep respect for the value of silence

### Reflective Question

- **How does night silence help you develop a sense of interior peace and provide stillness to hear God and to know yourself?**